

Fw: IMPORTANT -- FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Tue 2/2/2021 6:11 AM

To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

In a response to our comment request, a VA spokesperson updated their police officer count through 12/31/2020 and the article was updated. The spokesperson noted that all guns are "semi-automatic" and the article properly noted this fact. Furthermore, the spokesperson defined how the rifles are carried, stored, and their rules for usage; and this note was hyperlinked to the article.

Adam Andrzejewski

From: Noller, Randal

Sent: Friday, January 29, 2021 3:39 PM

To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Subject: FW: IMPORTANT -- FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Adam, I realize we're past your deadline but I just got this and wanted to pass along asap.

If you've already published, I'd ask for an update based on this information.

Thanks!

Randy

In 1996, Veterans Affairs did not employ a police force. Since 2010, the VA spent \$25.5 million on guns, 11 million rounds of ammunition, and other military-style equipment. Today, the VA has 3,957 law enforcement officers armed with a "long-gun program" – that's shorthand for AR-15s.

NO, the yellow highlighted statements are not correct.

Q: Size of police force (FTEs).

A: As of December 2020, there are 4,547 VA Police Officers.

Q: Information about outfitting the police with appropriate weapons (long guns v handguns) to perform their duties.

A: Department policy establishes mandatory weapons and training for each VA Police Officer.

All VA Police Officers carry a semi-automatic duty handgun. The VA Police do not carry shotguns. The VA Police do not carry "automatic" firearms.

The handgun and rifle are both "semi-automatic" which by design will fire only with a deliberate pull of the trigger for each individual shot.

All Officers have access to a "long gun." The Department established the M4 5.56 NATO, .223 caliber platform as the rifle or long gun to be deployed only in circumstances that can be defined as an active threat in progress. [*Long gun and rifle are terms used interchangeable to refer to the authorized M4 platform.*] This weapon is not carried openly while on duty; rather it is staged in locked racks or containers within police operations area or police vehicle so that it can be retrieved and deployed when needed.

Currently the authorized weapons for VA Police are the duty firearm, Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray and an expandable straight baton. The OC spray and baton are considered "less lethal" weapons used to disarm and subdue violent or potentially violent offenders. Firearms are used only in lethal force

encounters based on the VA Police Use of Force Policy and training that conforms to Department of Justice guidance.

From: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 8:10 AM

To: VA Public Affairs

Cc: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] IMPORTANT -- FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Adam Andrzejewski, a senior policy contributor at *Forbes*. We are working on a piece quantifying the guns, ammunition, and military-style equipment purchased in the executive agencies during 2015-2019. **My deadline for comment is today, January 27th at 2pm EST.**

If you miss our deadline, we will do our best to update the piece after you respond. All amounts and details referenced in the piece were captured via an open records posted at [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov).

Here's the paragraph where your agency is mentioned in the piece:

In 1996, Veterans Affairs did not employ a police force. Since 2010, the VA spent \$25.5 million on guns, 11 million rounds of ammunition, and other military-style equipment. Today, the VA has 3,957 law enforcement officers armed with a “long-gun program” – that’s shorthand for AR-15s.

Any context, feedback, or comment would be important to our readers at Forbes.

Sincerely,

Adam

Adam Andrzejewski (say: Angie-eff-ski)

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